(c) whether introduction of the Abhiyan is going to have any effect on the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M.A.A. FATMI): (a) and (b) A centrally sponsored scheme for universalisation of access to and improvement of quality of education at secondary stage, titled Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, has been formulated. The objective of the scheme is to make secondary education of good quality available, accessible and affordable to all young persons by ensuring a quality secondary school within a reasonable distance of every habitation, through either strengthening of existing schools or establishment of new schools. The scheme is to be implemented in partnership with State governments.

(c) and (d) The success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has created a surge in demand for secondary education and one of the objectives of the scheme is to meet this challenge by augmenting capacity and infrastructure in secondary schools. Thus the scheme will provide opportunity to students coming out of elementary schools, to complete secondary schooling.

Enhancement of financial grant for Mid-day Meal Scheme

2181. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the issue of price rise has created more problems for the Ministry, after the Public Accounts Committee suggesting to enhance financial grant for Mid-day Meal Scheme under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, in view of rising price index;

(b) whether one of its five recommendations pertains to national programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education scheme, popularly know as Mid-day Meal Scheme;

(c) if so, what are other main recommendations made and to what extent these have been implemented; and

(d) to what extent it has helped in improving programmes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M.A.A. FATMI): (a) At the time of extension of Mid-Day Meal Scheme to the upper primary stage, a decision to link the cost of cooking to Inflation Adjusted Index (Consumer Price Index) and assess cooking cost, both for primary and upper primary, every two years beginning 2008-09, was taken. Accordingly, with effect from 1.4.2008, the Central share of cooking cost was raised from Rs. 1.50 to Rs. 1.58 per child per working day for primary and from Rs.2.00 to Rs. 2.10 per child per school working day for upper primary. In case of North-Eastern (NER) States, including Sikkim, the Central share of cooking cast has been raised from Rs. 1.80 to Rs. 1.89 per child per school day at primary stage and from Rs.2.30 to Rs.2.42 per child per school working day at upper primary stage. Some States/UTs are spending more than their minimum mandatory contribution for betterment of mid-day meal which is 20 paisa per child per school day for NER States including Sikkim and 50 paisa per child per school day in case of other States/UTs.

(b) to (d) Of the four recommendations, one relates to Mid-Day Meal Scheme and three to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in their 66th Report (where out of 4 paras, 3 relate to SSA) has not made any recommendation relating to price rise in relation to this programme. Implementation of SSA Programme since 2000-01 has seen bringing of all eligible children in the age group of 6-14 years into the fold of elementary education except for 45 lakhs out-of-school children who represent children of 'difficult to reach category'.

Shortage of qualified faculty in higher education

2182. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that there is a shortage of properly qualified faculty in Central and State universities and other institutions of higher education, such as IITs and IIMs;

(b) if so, what steps Government proposes to take for recruiting adequate number of qualified teachers; and

(c) how our students would enter into the global competition?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) State Governments have been requested by the Central Government frequently to fill up the vacant positions in universities and colleges as such vacancies adversely affect the standards of education. During the State Education Minister's Conference held on 23-24 July, 2008, States agreed on the need for a clear plan of action for filling up all vacant positions of faculty.

In order to attract and retain their quality faculty members, IITs have been employing suitable strategic which include providing of good residential accommodation, good medical facilities, initial research grants and suitable schemes for sharing of consultancy charges. IITs have also increased their intake in Ph. D. programming with a view of making available increased number of eligible persons to take up faculty positions. The IIMs have also been taking suitable steps to fill up vacancies.

Central assistance to Andhra Pradesh for Mid-day Meal Scheme

2183. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Central assistance released during the last five years, yearwise, for Mid-day Meal Scheme to Andhra Pradesh, at the primary stage and the upper primary stage;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government has proposed to extend Mid-day Meals to children studying in classes VI to VIII; and

(c) how many children at primary and upper primary level would get the benefit of Mid-day Meal Scheme in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M.A.A. FATMI): (a) The details of Central assistance released to Andhra Pradesh during the last five years, year-wise, is given as under:—